THE

RIGHTEOUS

THE

Best SUBJECTS to the KING:

OR,

Godliness no Friend

TO

REBELLION,

Or Enemy to

Civil Government.

LONDON,

Printed for *R. Taylor* at Stationers Hall.

MDCXC.

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THE BEST SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT.

СОДЕРЖАНІЕ

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

HOw these weak and indigested Notes came to be made publike, is best known to some that heard them preacht, wherein their importunities prevailed against the Author's inclination and judgment, who thinks the world sufficiently stockt with Prints, and should not be overburthened in that matter, lest through the excess of insignificant Papers, things more weighty and important come to be nauseated or disregarded. Yet seeing, though

unworthy, they muſt come to view, that I may not wrong the Readers priviledge, I ſhall give a ſhort account of the Deſigne of this Diſcourſe; which as it promotes a great known Duty, incumbent eſpecially upon all the Profeſſors of Religion, ſo it fairly wipes off all thoſe blots and ſtains, which either the extravagancies of former times have occaſioned, or the bitterneſs & malice of ſome in theſe days caſt upon the Profeſſion of Godlineſs; who, that they might diſcourage the minds of people from embracing thoſe things and Principles which agree not with their own ſentiments or humor, before they well conſider or underſtand the nature or tendencie of them, with great clamour condemn them as intolerable in a Land, and only taken up to promote Rebellion and Faction. I confeſs, I could heartily wiſh, with ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that there never had occaſion been given to any to ſpeak evil of that which is good: But that hath come to paſs by the Providence of God, that there might be a more full conviction of unrighteouſneſs and error, and an ample juſtification of the Truth, and ways of Godlineſs; and if there be any ſo far led away by the

insincerity of their own hearts, as to abuse the Profession of Holy and Godly Principles and Perswasions, by any inconsistent action or course, that shall speak them trayterous, heady, high-minded, or the like, let such alone bear it, but let all that understand Christian Religion aright, under what form or name soever, Fear God, and honour the King; *and say with old* Jacob *concerning* Simeon *and* Levi, Oh! my Soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united. *Reader, This was the true Reason and Design of the Authors choice of this Subject, that if by any means he might stir up, or reduce the minds of dissenting Professors in this day, to be more sincere and more fervent in praying for the King, and for all that are in Authority, it being a Duty founded not only upon the light of Nature, but also upon the positive will of the Lord Christ; as also to bear his testimony, though in weakness, against the absurd and endless Cavils and accusations which disaffected persons heap upon the most holy ways of God; that he might declare to the world, that Godliness, and Scriptural Holiness in the most refined and highest*

parts

parts and practices of it, is a harmless innocent thing, no way inconsistent with Civil Government, but highly advantageous to the good and comfort of mans life. So that men need not look upon, or be afraid of the most strict method of holiness, as injurious, or as a pest to the Nation, because they give no disturbance to any thing but mens lusts and sins, to the pride and excess of the world, to which also Civil Government, according to its native Institution is, and by a regular management of it, should be a terror. And what is the fruit of our cavilling and bandying against each other about circumstantial things wherein we differ, but disunion, weakness, and a laying our selves open to the impressions and designs of the Common Enemy, who doubtless in all the furrows of our mutual animosities, do by their secret Agents sowe the seeds of greater divisions, and the Tares of their detestable Romish Doctrines and Superstition? Certainly, it is high time for every publike Talent to be employed for the more abundant preaching of the word of God, that the minds and understandings of people may be well furnisht with knowledge and Scripture-light, to enable them

them to judge betwixt Truth and Falſhood; which, when all is done, will be of great uſe to exclude Popery, and ſecure England *againſt it. For what will it avail by Power to exclude and caſt out the trumpery and exerciſe of that Worſhip from amongſt us, if the minds of people, through their own ignorance, or cunning guile of deceivers, ſhall be tainted with, and receive their Principles?*

Reader, *I ſhall detain thee no longer; do thy ſelf and me that right, to read what follows with that candor and charity, which a haſty Diſcourſe, compoſed under many diſturbances, calls for; it is not what the Subject deſerves, but what could be offered within the uſual limits of a Sermon. It little differs from what was delivered in publike, ſave in what was wanting through defect of memory, or want of time. If what is offered ſhall conduce to the healing of thy ſpirit, or the helping on of thy duty, the Author hath his deſigned recompence and reward in thy good, and ſhall bleſs God for it.*

EZRA

EZRA 6. 10.

That they may offer ſacrifices of ſweet ſavours unto God, and pray for the life of the King, and for the life of his Sons.

IN all the Revolutions and Changes that have paſſed upon the Affairs of the World, God's Providence hath in nothing more eminently appeared, than in matters relating to his *Church* and People, in their pilgrimage of this life. An eminent inſtance whereof, was this of the Jews going into *Babylon*, preſervation there, and wonderful return from their Captive condition, to their own Country of *Judea*, and the peculiar Worſhip of their God in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*: which deliverance and liberty, though it was much compleated in the reign of *Darius*, yet it was begun long before by the *Perſian Cyrus*; ſo that it will be needful to look back to his time, that we may the more fully ſee the riſe of this Decree, for the repair of the Temple. For with a narration of *Cyrus* his Decree, *Ezra* begins his Book. *Cyrus* having obtained great Conqueſts, he led his Army againſt *Babylon*; and having overcome

Joſeph. lib. 11. Of the Antiquities of the Jews.

great difficulties, he ſat down before that great City; which beſide the many wonderful fortifications of it, had the River *Euphrates* running through it. *Belſhazzar* then King thereof, with his *Babylonians*, ſcorning their Enemies, ſuppoſing their City impregnable, kept a great and ſolemn Feaſt in contempt of them, as alſo of the Jews and their Prophets, who had declared that the time was come for their returning to *Jeruſalem*; and thinking the time was paſt, in contempt of the God of the Jews, the King carouſed and drunk wine in the golden Veſſels of the Temple which *Nebuchadnezzar* carried away: but out of reverence to God, had not uſed or polluted them. At which Feaſt, the terrible hand-writing upon the wall appeared, as in the 5th of *Daniel*. *Belſhazzar*, notwithſtanding the faithful remonſtrance and interpretation of *Daniel*, goeth on with his luxurious Feaſt, filling themſelves with wine; when, lo, the wrath of God, according to his word, was ready to fall upon them: For that very night, *Cyrus* having by his Engineers, and the help of his numerous Army, turned the River *Euphrates*, which, as I ſaid, ran through the City, from its uſual courſe; in the Chanel thereof with his Army entred the City, the people being buried in their wine and drunkenneſs; fully executed what was long before propheſied by *Jeremiah*, Chapt. 51. About this time the Prophets *Zechariah* and *Haggai* earneſtly ſtirred up the Princes that were of the Captivity to think of returning, and repairing *Jeruſalem* and the Temple. But if the work was hard to be attempted under the impious *Belſhazzar*, it ſeems now impoſſible under the terrible conquering

quering *Cyrus*: for what lenity could they expect to find in him, that had made ſuch dreadful havock in the City of *Babylon*? The Prophets to this diſcouragement oppoſed two Arguments: One, of God's Sovereignty, as in *Zechariah*, Chapt. 4. ver. 7. *Who art thou, O great Mountain?* (that is, *Cyrus*) *before Zorobabel thou ſhalt become a plain; he ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone thereof with ſhoutings, crying, Grace, Grace unto it.* The power and ſpirit of *Cyrus* ſeemed like a great Mountain in the way of their return, hard, if not impoſſible to be overcome; which yet through the Omnipotencie of God ſhould vaniſh, as to any reſiſtance and impediment to their Journey and work. The other Argument was from the Propheſie of *Iſaiah*, Chapt. 44. three laſt Verſes: *That confirmeth the word of his ſervant, and performeth the counſel of his Meſſengers: that ſaith to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of Judah, Ye ſhall be built, and I will raiſe up the decayed places thereof: That ſaith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That ſaith of Cyrus, He is my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be built, and to the Temple, Thy foundation ſhall be laid.* What greater encouragement could the people have, than ſo plain a Propheſie, apparently to be fulfilled about this time? but their minds, *viz.* of the Jews, were either enured to their bondage, or diſheartned by the inacceſſible Majeſty of *Cyrus*, ſo, as they were much diſcouraged, and could not tell what to do in that cauſe; when loe, the *Almighty* wrought for them; and him whom they could not force, God made willing and free to their

ſo much deſired liberty. For God brought it to paſs, that the King had a ſight of the Jews Law, and particularly of the Propheſie of *Iſaiah*, Chapt. 44, and 45. (written two hundred and ten years before his time) concerning himſelf. When he heard it (ſays *Joſephus*) he was ſo aſtoniſhed at the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, and filled with admiration, and zeal to fulfil what was foretold he ſhould perform concerning *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, that he wrote Letters to his Princes in all *Aſia*; *Thus ſaith* Cyrus, *Seeing God hath made me King of all the world, I do believe it is he whom the Jews worſhip: for he hath declared my name by his Prophets, before I was born, and hath ſaid that I ſhall build his Temple in* Jeruſalem, *which is in the Country of* Judea. Then he made a Decree (as in the firſt of *Ezra* we have it) for the return of the people of the Jews to their Country: Upon which *Zorobabel*, with many whoſe ſpirits *God ſtirred up* to the work, returned to *Jeruſalem*; yet many others of the people, for their poſſeſſions or imployments ſake, ſtaid behind, and did not go up with the reſt of their Brethren. But this excellent *Cyrus* lived not long, but ſoon after died in the proſecution of his Wars; ſo as little was done in his time in the work of the Temple. After *Cyrus*, came *Ahaſuerus*, or *Artaxerxes*, who little favoured the work, ſo as their Enemies took encouragement to hinder it what they could: which kept it back all his time, which was about nine years. To him the *Officers* of the King, and the Jews enemies, accuſed them, for building a rebellious City, and factious Temple. The King believing the report, decreed againſt the work, as in the 4*th* Chapter of *Ezra*, we have at large.

So

So as little was done whilſt he lived. He being cut off in the midſt of his impiety by an eminent hand of God, *Darius* ſucceeded, who from a private condition by the conſent of the Princes is ſaluted King of *Perſia*. Upon this change, the High Prieſt adviſeth *Zorobabel* to congratulate the Kings promotion, and ſollicite for liberty and favour to carry on the Temple-work. *Zorobabel* upon his appearance at Court is admitted to favour, and made one of the Kings Guard; there he was informed of a Vow the King made before he came to the Crown, *viz.* that if ever he obtained the Majeſty and Sovereignty of the Empire, he would cauſe the Temple at *Jeruſalem* to be built, and the remaining Veſſels reſtored, and what ſhould be wanting given to the work. This gave him ſome incouragement; but how to improve it he knew not; when behold, the wonderful Providence of God, who boweth the Heavens, and is preſent to order the affairs and ſpirits of men, for the fulfilling of his counſel and will in all things, made a plain way for him: for *Darius* having royally treated his Princes, that night he could not ſleep; and as he lay on his bed, diſcourſing with his Guard, he gave to three of them, whereof *Zorobabel* was one, three Queſtiſtions to declaim on the next day, making great promiſes to him that ſhould be adjudged the beſt learned. The next day the King calling his Princes together, heard their *Orations*, and all concluded for *Zorobabel*. Then the King required him to ask what he would have. He preſently anſwered, Oh King, all that I ask, is, that you would remember your promiſe, and make good your Vow made before you came to

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the Crown, *viz.* that if ever you attained your Dignity, you would rebuild the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and reſtore the golden Veſſels taken away. The King hearing this, embraced him, and kiſſed him; and beſides many Honours conferred on him, gave him ample Letters to his Governours, for the carrying on the work, as in the *6th* of *Ezra*, and to furniſh them with all things needful for the worſhip of God; That (as verſe the *10th*) they may offer Sacrifices of ſweet ſavour unto God, and to pray for *the life of the King, and for the life of his Sons.*

Thus I have given you a glimpſe of God's care and Providence over his Church in her wilderneſs and captive condition: We come now to the words, in which the Phraſe muſt be a little opened.

Sacrifices were of divers kinds; and for its nature, it was *munus fœderale*, as one calls it, a *federal gift*, by which, as the ſinner declared his ſubjection and ſervice to God, ſo on the other hand God declared his acceptance of, and reconciliation towards the ſinner, and that he took him into his peculiar care and protection. Accordingly we find in Scripture, that Sacrifice was uſed as a Divine Rite of invocation or prayer to God; So 1 *Samuel*, Chapt. 13. ver. 12. ſays *Saul, Therefore I ſaid, The Philiſtines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made ſupplication to the Lord; I forced my ſelf, therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.* So *Pſalm* 116. *I will take the cup of Salvation, and call on the Name of the Lord.* The cup of Salvation is that drink-offering which was *poured* upon the Sacrifice, while they were calling on, or praying to the Lord; ſo that ſacrificing was a kind

kind of praying, typically including the ground of prayer and hope: for what ground can there be for prayer, but the Covenant and promiſe of God? or of hope to receive from God, but by the pardon of ſin? for how can any man ſuppoſe that God ſhould bleſs him according to his prayers, while he is under guilt and irremiſſion of ſin, and God irreconciled unto him? So that Sacrifice here is a Rite of Invocation and Prayer; and with us, prayer in the Name of Chriſt, is the ſame in effect with what Sacrifices of ſweet Odours were to them.

The life of the King; That is, the preſervation of his natural life, the welfare of his Affairs and Government; *and of his Sons, viz.* the welfare of his Family, the preſervation of his Succeſſors.

This ſhall ſuffice for the opening of the Phraſe; come we now to the Obſervations.

Conſider the favour of *Darius* as an effect of his Vow, and the Obſervation will be;

Obſ. That where the fear of God is in the heart of man, or any religious regard toward God, his Vows and Promiſes of Obedience ſhall be duly and faithfully kept and performed; though they are not immediately fulfilled, yet they ſhall not always be laid by and forgotten. This great *Darius* having made a Vow to reſtore God's people the Jews to their liberty Civil and Religious, though for ſome Reaſons of State, or the neceſſity of preſent affairs ſo requiring it, or the defect of his memory, he for a ſhort time fulfilled not this generous Vow, yet he owned it, and took thankfully the remembrance of it; and God ſo ordering it, made his Princes and Captains ſee how much

much he was bound in point of honour to God and himſelf to make good his word.

2. *Obſ.* Secondly, Obſerve, that where the fear of God is, there will be a religious calling upon God, in entrance of any ſolemn work civil or divine: So *Jacob* when he went to his Uncle *Laban*, ſought to God for ſupply, as his Vow imports; and when he returned, for fear of his Brother *Eſau*, how he wraſtled with God! And *Darius* here, entring as it were upon his great work of Government, ſeeks to God by his people the Jews for a bleſſing.

3. *Obſ.* Thirdly, Obſerve, That the clemencie and beneficence of the King, and Governours under him, is a great obligation upon the minds of people to duty and obedience. It is an old Maxime, that *Protectio trahit Allegiantiam*, that Protection doth draw Allegiance; the more generouſly any Prince preſerveth the due liberty and welfare of the Subjects, the more fully will their minds embrace his Government, and they become duly obſervant of him. It was fit for the mouth of an Heathen, *Tiberius*, to ſay, *When I am dead, let the world be mingled with fire*; Or, of an impious *Caligula*, *Let men hate me, ſo they fear me.*

'Tis true, ſeverity and roughneſs ſeem to become Sovereignty and Greatneſs; but the common product & effect of it is, ſecretly to caſt the minds into extreme deſpair, and conſequently to give diſturbance and unſettlement to Government. This *Rehoboam* knew to his coſt, when for his ſeverity ten Tribes revolted with *Jeroboam* from the houſe of *David.* Clemencie is the moſt Orient Pearl in the Crown; there is no cord draws and binds more firmly and ſurely than that of love;

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love: for as *Solomon* hath it, *Prov.* Chapt. 20. ver. 28. *Mercy and Truth preserve the King, and his Throne is established by Mercy.*

But I shall pass these things, and speak to four Truths, of which the Kings mind seemed to be convinced.

1. First, That Kings and Governours that have great things upon their hands, stand in great need of Prayer: If mean men in their private affairs and difficulties of life, which are but of a narrow compass, stand in need of Prayers; how much more Kings, Parliaments, and Inferiour Governours, that have the burden and weight of Government upon their shoulders? Therefore *Darius* with an humble greatness declared his own insufficiencie, either for protection, or right management of the power which God had put into his hand, by his calling for Prayer. As if he had said, Let the world know, and do ye all my people see, that I stand in need of Prayer, that I may obtain the Divine help and assistance of God upon my Throne. But take it particularly.

Reas. 1. They stand in need of Prayer, because it is hard work to Govern well; very hard work where the mind is faithful in the discharge of it; the disquieting thoughts and macerating cares that attend the mind of Governours, how much do they hinder those common contents and ease of this life, that others enjoy? We are all taken with the glistering shew of Royalty, but do not see the thorns that Crowns are lined with; how the King as a civil father should answer the variety of perswasions, interests, dispositions and desires of his people, and keep

all within the bounds of peace. Subjection and Loyalty is no eaſie thing without God's aſſiſtance. 'Tis true, that in a *Halcyon* and proſperous time, Government ſeems eaſie and deſirable to every one; but to ſtand at the Helm in a ſtormy day, when the bluſtering contradictions of Affairs make all tremble, when the very *Foundations* are as it were out of courſe; it is no eaſie thing then to ſecure the welfare of a Kingdom, and reduce its affairs to a ſtate of peace and quietneſs. This ſhews how much the King and thoſe in Government want Prayer.

Reaſ. 2. Secondly, They want Prayer for protection; for great *Eminencies* have always their great dangers: certainly, there is no ſort of men more expoſed to danger than they, on whom the weight of Government moſt lieth; the Chriſtian Governors who ſet their faces againſt ſin and wickedneſs, againſt Popery and prophaneneſs. It is hard to manage Rule and Power without prejudicing ſome Intereſt, and diſtaſting ſome ſorts of perſons, to the raiſing diſaffections and diſcontents in their minds, which by Romiſh Principles of Religion will be improved to one miſchief or other to the King or Nation. You have heard, and I hope it is remembred with deteſtation to the impious Principles of the Jeſuites, who plotted, and by their Agents endeavoured to introduce the Romiſh Religion, through the ruine of our Government and Governours, by plotting to blow up with Gun-powder the King, the Prince, the Lords and Commons then aſſembled in Parliament; all which they purpoſed and endeavoured. but God in mercy to this Nation prevented them; which ſpeaks

that

that Kings and Governours do need Prayers for their protection and ſafety.

Reaſ. 3. Thirdly, Becauſe their affairs concern more than themſelves, and conſequently the unhappy iſſues and events of their failings take hold of more than themſelves; yea, the perſonal failings of thoſe in Government are of a publike import and conſequence; as you know when *Saul* ſlew the *Gibeonites* in his zeal, how God plagued the Nation of the Jews for it: So when *David* numbred the people, God brought a ſore Judgment upon the Land for that ſin; and for his ſin in the matter of *Uriah*, though a perſonal failing, yet the Lord ſuffered the unnatural Rebellion of *Abſalom* to break out, to the trouble of the whole Land: ſo that the failings of thoſe that are in Authority, relate to more than themſelves, therefore we had need pray that God would be with them in their great Affairs, in which they cannot miſcarry, but the Nation at leaſt muſt feel it, if not mourn deeply under it.

4. Fourthly, Pray that they in Authority may attain the true ends of Government. There is nothing higher and greater among men, than *Humane Sovereignty*, which God hath not ſet in the world for a vain ſhew, or given it to men, that they might lord it over their fellow-creatures: But God hath ſet *Kings and Parliaments*, and every kind of Governour in the world for his own glory, and the good of mankind, to ſeek and endeavour the proſperity, riches and honour of a Nation; that the true Religion be maintained; that vice and wickedneſs be diſcouraged, and vertue and goodneſs be countenanced; that

Trade be duly cherisht and encouraged. These and the like are the noble ends of Government, and things worthy the care of Kings and Governours to prosecute and promote: they therefore need Prayer, that they may not come short of the generous and noble ends of their being.

5. Fifthly, They want Prayer, because they have great temptations, much greater than other men meet with: all temptations give a trial to men, much more those that are backt with power. There is no Greatness but hath its Temptation; Riches are a temptation to Luxury, to excesses of conversation; Power and Greatness a Temptation to Pride, to Injustice and Oppression: But besides these and the like, Kings, and those in Authority have the Temptations of their evil Councellours or Flatterers, these make it their business to insinuate and distil upon the mind of the King, either evil Principles, or false reports, to the debauching his understanding, to render him negligent of his duty, or confident in that which is evil. *Saul* had always those about him that traduced and accused *David*, so as to stir up and provoke his rage against him; which gave no small disturbance to himself and the Nation: We had need therefore pray that God would disabuse and free the mind of the King and those in Authority from such entangling and misleading counsels.

Use. For Use: See then the reason of the Apostles exhortation, 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. *Let prayers and supplications with thanksgiving be made for all men, especially for Kings, and those in Authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and*

and honesty. This is a great duty in order to our well-being as men, and as Christians; which doth not depend upon the well-doing of Governours, but is founded upon the Sovereign will of God, as in the third verse: *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of Jesus Christ our Lord.* So that this is not a matter left to our liberty and choice, but a duty, the neglect whereof is not only a *deviation* from the Rule which God hath set us to walk by, but an implicite endeavour to throw the Nation into disturbance and disorder: for if Governours be set in the world for the good of mankind, and Prayer bring any advantage or benefit to them, we cannot withhold our Prayers for them, without prejudicing the Nations peace and welfare. Again, pray that ye may help them in their work: For, as we help the King with our money; so also with our Prayers; which speaks the wonderful wisdom of God, in making every part of the world a tributary to the whole, by which it consisteth: for as Kings and Governours do help us in point of protection, and the preservation of right to us; so we do or may help, by our Prayers to God, the King upon the Throne, the Parliament in framing Laws, the Judge in giving Sentence upon the Bench; therefore pray for them.

2. Observe in the second place, That God only can bless and prosper Kings and Rulers of the world. This is a great Truth, of which the mind of our *Darius* in the Text seems to be convinced, that God only could make the Sword in his hand powerful and prosperous, victorious and successful: *That they may pray*, &c. as if he had said, Let God be sought; for it is he only

only that clotheth me with happineſs. This the Scripture declareth, *Proverbs 8th* the 14 *and* 15 Verſe: *Counſel is mine, & ſound wiſdom; I am underſtanding, I am ſtrength* (ſpoken of Chriſt, in whoſe hand God hath lodged all power) ſays he, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice; By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Rulers of the earth.* So that the right and ſucceſsful ſwaying the Scepter is of God; yea, the wiſdom which capacitates and fits great Ones, for their high and noble Employments, is of God, and ſo are the beautiful effects of Wiſdom his alſo; for were the Kings Councellors for wiſdom like the Angels of God, yet if God be not in all their Councels, to guide their thoughts, and govern their debates, their iſſues would ſoon entangle the Nation. Though Parliaments conſiſt of wiſe, experienced and faithful men, yet it is of God that they decree Juſtice and Righteouſneſs. This is the God that guided *David* in all his ſtraights; that ordered his leaving *Jeruſalem* (when *Abſalom* rebelled) for his preſervation: It is he that left *Abſalom* to chooſe the councel of *Huſhai* to his confuſion, that he might puniſh him for his diſloyalty and rebellion againſt the King his Father, and bring upon his head the blood of his brother *Amnon*, whom he ſlew in his revengeful rage. This is he that draws the Sword of War, and gives it commiſſion to drink blood, ſo as none can ſtay it, and make peace; this is he that puts the Sword up into the ſcabbard, ſo as none ſhall give diſturbance; this is the *Lord of the whole earth*, in whoſe hands are all the iſſues and events of affairs and undertakings of men; ſo that it is not in the power of men, of King

and

and Parliament, of Armies or Navies, to proſper and make happy; they are but inſtruments at the beſt, the bleſſing is from the Lord. The Uſe of this is,

1. Firſt, Then learn where to leave and lodge the publike affairs of the Nation, even in the hand of the Almighty. There are many things dear and precious to you, and are much upon your heart, as the maintenance of the true Proteſtant faith, the excluſion of Popery, the encreaſe of Trade, the preſervation of juſt Rights and Liberties, the upholding the Honour of the Nation abroad, and the like: now who but God can give theſe to a people? Go then to God by faſting and prayer, humbly in regard of ſin; in Faith, conſidering his promiſe, believing that God, and he only, can make us an happy people; happy in our King, happy in our Parliament; commit them by faith and prayer to the Grace and aſſiſtance of God. Hath God committed Government by his Providence and appointment to them? do you commit them to God: For if God be not with them, they cannot proſper. It was not for nothing that *Moſes* was ſo importunate with God for his preſence, ſaying, *Lord, if thy preſence go not with us, carry us not up hence*; for without thee we cannot go on in ſafety. This is a great people, and who can keep us right but thy ſelf? therefore let thy preſence go with us. Oh! then, what diſcontents, jealouſies and fears may be that ariſe in your mind, let them ſend you to God, drive you to the Throne of Grace. Alas! it is in vain for *Rachel* to be angry and chide with her huſband *Jacob* for children; God muſt open her womb, or ſhe muſt die in her barrenneſs. 'Tis true, as there are inſtruments of

bleſſings,

bleſſings, ſo of evils and puniſhments to a Nation; but our eye ſhould not be ſo much upon them, as upon God, from whom every good and evil cometh. Thus *David* quieted his ſpirit in the caſe of *Shimei*'s curſings; and this would not a little conduce to the quietneſs and peace of a Nation under croſſes and evils that come upon us for our ſin. The woman with her bloody iſſue may ſpend all her ſubſtance upon Phyſitians; but it is God muſt limit her diſtemper, it is God alone that can cure her; ſhe muſt come to Chriſt, or die in her diſeaſe. It is not the high wall of treaſure, nor the long Sword of Power, that can deliver or ſecure a Nation. Then do not make *Kings* or *Parliaments*, forein Allianeies, Armies, or Navies, your ſtrength; for God many times blaſts that we confide moſt in, that we might learn where to confide and truſt: So the Lord called *Iſrael* to re-mind the diſappointment of their leaning upon *Aſſyria*, *Hoſ.* 5. ver. 13. *When Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah ſaw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Aſſyrian, and ſent to King Jareb, yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.* When God brought them into a ſtreight, they made the Aſſyrian their *Jareb* or Saviour; by him they reckoned they ſhould ſave themſelves, or ſubdue their enemies. But, ſays God, he could not help you, ye are wounded and weak ſtill. When ſhall we learn to ſanctifie God's Sovereignty by an humble and fiducial reliance upon him in all our ſtreights and difficulties, and ſay as returning *Ephraim*, *Jer.* 3. ver. 23. when God ſaith, *Return you back-ſliding children, and I will heal your back-ſlidings*; Behold, ſay they, *we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

God. Mark, what follows: *Truly, in vain is Salvation looked for from the hills, and from the mountains; Truly, in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel.* Oh! that we could fiducially say so of *England*: In the Lord our God is the Salvation of *England.*

2. The second Use is, That we would pray that God would keep this great Truth upon the heart of our *Sovereign King*, and his Councellors, also upon the heart of the Honourable Trustees of the Nation assembled in Parliament; That God only can bless Governours, and make their work prosperous in their hand. Certainly, the more such a Perswasion taketh hold and prevaileth upon the minds of men, the more they will endeavour to sanctifie the Name of God, either by doing vertuous and worthy actions, or avoiding that which is unrighteous and unjust, knowing, that the Throne is only established in righteousness. Sirs, by a little consideration of affairs in all ages, you may take notice how God hath contested and striven with the world about the Honour of his Name and Sovereignty: this is the main and great Reason of the wonderful and strange Revolutions and Changes of the Affairs, States, Governments and Kingdoms in the world; namely, the Honour of God. He hath left such Prints and Characters of his Majesty and Sovereignty upon the affairs of men, That they may know he is God, and ruleth in the Kingdom of men; and that men, whatever their appearances and blusterings here below are, do make but a vain shew; they cannot stop the Counsel of God, nor the effecting of his will in any thing, who shall certainly do whatever he hath said

or determined. This Doctrine we have in *Eccleſiaſtes* the 8th, verſe 14. *I know that whatſoever God doth, it ſhall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth it, that men ſhould fear before him:* That is, it is not in man to alter any courſe of Affairs which God hath ſet; but it ſhall run in a conſtant courſe, like a mighty river that cannot be reſiſted; thus it ſhall be for ever: and if God will bleſs a Nation, and multiply its comforts and proſperity, none ſhall be able to break the hedge of his Providence, or leſſen the heap of bleſſings which he hath given: or if he will bring a curſe and calamity upon a people, it is not in the power of man further than God will uſe him as an inſtrument, to add to the affliction, nor can he help and deliver from the trouble, no nor mitigate or leſſen it in the leaſt degree, whatever we may think. The reaſon of all is given, *viz. That men ſhould fear before him*; as if he had ſaid, They will not fear me, but the Creature, if it were able to make any alteration either for good or evil. Thus God would have all men ſanctifie his Name, by having ſuch thoughts of him in their minds. And he ſeems to beſpeak the world at this day by his Providence, as he did in the 46th *Pſalm*, verſe 8, 9, 10. *Come, behold, the works of the Lord, what deſolation he hath made in the earth: He maketh wars to ceaſe unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the ſpear in ſunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire: Be ſtill, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.* What a majeſtical Challenge is this of God, beſpeaking the whole world in point of his

Honour

Honour. Oh! pray that God would powerfully inſtil this upon the mind of the Great Ones of our earth, that they alſo may ſanctifie his great Name aright.

3. A third Obſervation or Truth which ſeemed to be upon the heart of our *Darius* here is, That as God only can bleſs us, ſo God will be worſhipt of us, and ſought to by Prayer for thoſe bleſſings we ſtand in need of. 'Tis true, God can bleſs us without our aſking, but he will be ſanctified in the way of his diſpenſations. There is no rational expectance to be had of God's bleſſings, but in the way which himſelf hath ſet and appointed, *viz.* the way of Prayer: the Heathens were much convinced of this, that no good thing could be obtained of their Gods, but by Sacrifice; which, as we have ſhewed, was a Rite of Invocation or Prayer; therefore in all their ſolemn attempts and motions, ſtill they began with Sacrifice, imploring their Gods to be propitious to their deſigns, and give ſucceſs to their noble and high enterpriſes. And if the light of Nature evidence ſo much Religion and regard to God, How much more ſhould Chriſtian Religion teach us to ſeek God in all our undertakings and concernments relating to our private, or the publike affairs of the Nation? For though God's mind is always inclined through free Grace to do good to mankind, yet for the honour of his Name, it ſhall be in a way of ſanctifying his Ordinances and Appointments; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *Let your requeſts be made known to God*; not as if God needed our relation or diſcovery of our wants to him; No, he knows our wants before we ask: but

by our asking of God, we declare our dependance upon him, and recognize or acknowledge his Sovereignty over us: nor do our Prayers make a change in the Counsels and purposes of God; but they many times make a change in our minds, when thereby our hearts are wrought to be more humble in patience and submission, more believing in quieting our minds, in resting upon the Promises of God's Grace; for God hath annexed great promises of good to those that call upon him: *Call upon me*, says he, *in the day of trouble, and I will hear you*; for your Nation, for your families, or as we have it in 1 *Chronicles* 17. 14. *If my people which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and return from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* So that the great and good things which God hath promised, are still with reference to the way of Prayer; therefore *Jeremiah* 29. *verse* 11. saith the Lord by his Prophet, *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end; then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will hearken to you.* When you would have an end of wars, the way is to go to God by Prayer; for God will be sought to, whatever his thoughts are, that in every thing his Name may be honoured.

Use. Now for Use: This shews the Holiness of Prayer; how much it tends to God's Honour, that his Creatures do in all the affairs of their life, commit and commend themselves to God by Prayer. As

alſo it ſhews the uſefulneſs of Prayer to us, How great a help it is either to our affairs, or our mind in all our ſtreights: This is the golden Key that unlocks the Treaſury of Gods Alſufficiencie, and gives us to ſee that there are more with us than againſt us; this is the Bucket that fetches up water of life, in the wilderneſs of our extremities and neceſſities, and brings relief and refreſhment to the mind of man; when nothing elſe will quiet his ſpirit, this will. Oh! then roul all your burdens upon the Lord; the burden of national Affairs, of family affairs, or of your particular concernments, which will anſwer one end of afflictions; for when God ſends a Famine, or Plague, or War, or any other diſturbance upon a Nation or People, it is, that we might ſeek unto God, who ſtands ready to be entreated by a Reforming people; he waits that he might be gracious to ſuch a people, who obſerve every Call of God to duty, and rightly interpret every Voice to its proper end and intendment. Of Judgments, to a fervent praying and ſtriving with God to remove them. Of Sin, to humiliation, and beſeeching God to divert his impending wrath, and prevent the ruine of the Nation. Of the want of this God complained, *Ezek.* 22. ver. 29, 30. *The people of the Land have uſed oppreſſion, and exerciſed robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppreſſed the ſtranger wrongfully; and I ſought for a man among them to ſtand in the gap before me for the Land, but I found none.* See what follows: *Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have conſumed them with the fire of my wrath, their own way have I re-*

compenſed

compenſed upon their head, ſaith the Lord. So that when the voice of injuſtice and wickedneſs cried againſt *Iſrael*, becauſe none was found to plead with God; Oh! how ill it went with them! Sin opens a gap for a flood of wrath to break in upon a people; and when a Voice of Atheiſm, Prophaneſs, and unparallel'd Impieties are heard in our Land, what but a way of Prayer and humiliation can produce any ſecurity for the Nation. Oh! then ſeek to the Lord that he would purge the Land in Mercy, not in Judgment; Let not the Lord ſay, I ſought for a man to ſtand in the gap, and turn away my wrath from *England*, and found none. Think of this you that live without Prayer, in whoſe Family the Voice of Prayer is not heard. How little do you ſerve the Publike good of the Nation? Whom doth God threaten with his fury, but the Families that call'd not on his Name? How will the men of *Nineveh* riſe up in Judgment againſt ſuch a Generation, who when they heard but the threatnings of wrath, fell to praying and faſting, *Jonah* 3. verſe 5. *So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a Faſt, and put on ſackcloth, from the greateſt of them to the leaſt.* And in ver. 8. *Let man and beaſt be covered with ſackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands.* And verſe 9. *For who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, and we periſh not?* Obſerve what eminent ſucceſs they found in the way of God, as verſe 10. *And God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid he*

he would do to them, and did it not. This, and what elſe is written, is written for our inſtruction; and what cauſe ſhall we have to be ſilent for ever before the Lord, if after all ſmitings and admonitions, paſt or preſent troubles, we turn not to the Lord, and ſeek to him for pardon and help, when the Lord ſhall avenge himſelf upon us to the full: oh then! let us take that way God hath appointed for deliverance and proſperity.

4. But in the laſt place, there is another Truth that ſeemed to be upon the heart of this great *Darius*; and that is,

Doct. That God will be entreated only by his Servants. Says he, *That they may pray for the life of the King.* *They*, that is, the Servants of the living God, the Children of God, they are moſt like to do good at Prayer to God for me, for God is entreated only of his Servants. But who are thoſe Servants of whom only God will be entreated?

1. They are oppoſed to Atheiſts, who ſay, There is no God. The Scripture ſaith, *He that comes to God muſt believe that God is*; That is eſſential to Prayer; the contrary cuts off, and deſtroys the very eſſence of Prayer: So that not Atheiſts, but they that believe there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him, ſhall prevail with God in Prayer.

2. Secondly, The Servants of God are oppoſed to Idolaters, that worſhip falſe Gods: Let every one go to his own God; now he that ſerves the God of Heaven and earth is moſt like to prevail with this God. The Prieſts of *Baal* they cry'd to *Baal*, and the

the Heathens in the ſhip with *Jonah*, cry to their God; but *Elijah* or *Jonah* could only prevail with the God of Iſrael; and who are moſt like to prevail with that God, but they that truly worſhip him? Otherwiſe the Prayers of a Heathen, that worſhip the Sun and Moon, might prevail as much as ours.

3. Thirdly, They are oppoſed to impious and profane ones. There are a Generation of ſuch in the world, who by their wicked lives confute their Religion, and their Chriſtian name, and Prayers. If a Heathen ſhould hear their words, and ſee their actions and manner of living, it would make them think either there is no God, or that the God of the Chriſtians is a falſe God; of ſuch it is ſaid, *That the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

4. Laſtly, They are oppoſed to Unbelievers; Chriſt being the Object of Faith, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; through whoſe Name alone we are welcome to God: As Chriſt ſaith, *Whatever ye aſk in my Name believingly, it ſhall be granted to you.* And again, *There is no Name under Heaven whereby we can be ſaved, but the Name of Jeſus Chriſt only.* So that without Faith in his Name, whereby any one accepts and depends upon Chriſt as a Saviour and Deliverer, he cannot expect to prevail with God in Prayer; God will be entreated only of thoſe who have by Faith embraced the Lord Jeſus, whom the Goſpel by the appointment of God holds forth to be a Saviour to loſt ſinners: otherwiſe the Prayers of a Turk would be as acceptable to God, as the Prayers of a Chriſtian; Nay, the Prayers of a Jew, who ſcornfully deny

deny Christ to be come in the flesh, may do as much in Heaven, as the Prayers of one who savingly believes in Christ: No, such shall one day know that there is one, and but one true God, and that Jesus Christ his Son is the appointed way of Salvation, and that they only who truly believe on him, to a receiving the Kingdom of his Spirit and Grace in their hearts, to regeneration and holiness, are those Servants of whom God will be entreated in mercy, either for publike or private blessings. To clear this, I could give you many instances; take only two or three. When God laid a Judgement upon the family of *Abimelech*, saith God to him, Go to *Abraham*, for he is a Prophet, he shall pray for you, him I will hear. And in the last Chapter of *Job*, ver. 38. *Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for your selves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.* How unexpected was this to these men, that this despised *Job*, whom they endeavored so much to convict of hypocrisie, is only accepted of God, and to him they must go to pray and entreat God for them? So, though *Jeremiah* was a man of sorrows, and much despised of all sorts in his time, yet the time came when *Zedekiah* the King sent his honourable Messengers to *Jeremy*, saying, *Pray now unto the Lord our God for us*, as in *Jer.* 37. verse 3. So we read in the *Acts* concerning the Jews, however they had despised the *Lord of Life*, as also his Apostles, yet being convinced of their sin and lost condi-

tion by their Miniſtery and Preaching, they came to thoſe deſpiſed Apoſtles, crying out in bitterneſs of ſpirit, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* So the Goaler ye read of in the *Acts*, who no doubt helped on the perſecution of the Apoſtles by his rude and courſe uſage; yet when God broke in upon his Soul with a mighty convincing and aſtoniſhing power, he came trembling to thoſe very men, whom he had not long before put in the ſtocks, crying out, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* Theſe inſtances ſhall ſuffice to ſhew us, that God is only entreated by his Servants; and that whoſe perſons are accepted in Chriſt, their Prayers only are powerful with God. I might give ſeveral Reaſons for this: But I haſten to the Uſe.

Uſe. Firſt, If ſo, then I beſeech you learn to prize holineſs and godlineſs: for though no man is accepted for his holineſs, yet no man without holineſs ſhall ever ſee God, or be accepted of God. Let not your eye be upon what the World magnifies, but upon what God delights in. For that which is in high eſteem with men, may be an abomination with God: all the Dignities of this world cannot give you the worth that Godlineſs will put upon you; this makes a man weigh down a thouſand of the Sons of *Belial.* Wicked and prophane wretches are as the droſs of the earth, while the Godly Chriſtian is as gold in God's ſight; God will only be entreated of ſuch: Oh! then give Godlineſs its due honour and regard: Let all ſcoffing *Iſhmaels* take heed they be not found guilty and anſwerable at the great day of Judgment, for abaſing and abuſing that which God will

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will honour, and takes more pleaſure in than in any thing beſides here below. There are many, too many for the welfare of the Nation, who do not only take pleaſure in an impious looſneſs of Converſation, but in railing and ſcoffing vent their fooliſh malice againſt religiouſneſs, purity, and ſtrictneſs of life: let ſuch take heed, for in ſo doing they fight againſt God, who ſets a value upon his Holy Ones, that tremble at his word, and will hear them, when all the earth ſhall be ſilent before him.

2. Secondly, Let it invite you all this day that are out of Chriſt, to come in and accept of him and his ways: this priviledge and honor will one day be conſiderable to you; to which you can never attain, but by eſpouſing Chriſt, his intereſt, & ways, by Faith.

3. Thirdly, Then you that have an intereſt in God, and acceptance through Chriſt, improve it at the Throne of Grace, for the King and all that are in Authority; who knows what Judgments you may divert, what bleſſings you may draw down upon the Nation? *Luther* was ſo great an admirer of Prayer, that he almoſt called it *Omnipotent*. Prayer is not for a private uſe only, but for a publike good. As Trading men uſe their Treaſures for advantage and gain to themſelves and others, ſo do you improve your Grace and heavenly Intereſt, ſo as the Nation may fare the better for you, by the fervencie and powerfulneſs of your Prayers for the King, Parliament, and thoſe that have lawful Authority in their hands: let it appear who is your Father, of what Family, and of what ſpirit ye are; that ye may give a proof to the world of the Divinity of thoſe Principles and Perſwa-

sions you adhere to so strictly. Thus God's people in all former times have done: So *Jechonias* in his Captive state, caused a Collection of money to be made, and sent it to *Jerusalem*, with a Letter, saying, *We have sent you money to buy sacrifices of meat-offerings and drink-offerings, and sweet odours, that ye may offer them upon the Altar that is at Jerusalem, and pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar, and for the life of Belteshazzar his son, that their days on earth may be as the days of Heaven.* Thus he seemed to approve the Divinity and Innocencie of that Religion they professed, which however it differed from, or contradicted the Babylonish Idolatry, yet was not inconsistent with, but useful to their Civil State and Government. And *Cyprian* being accused of Rebellion, makes this the proof his innocencie, saying, How can that be? for the world knows that we pray for the King, and the welfare of his Government. So *Tertullian* in his Apology for the Christians in his time, gives this as a proof that the Christian Religion was a holy and peaceable Religion: for, saith he, in our Prayers we seek God for the life of the *Emperour*, for his prosperous state and reign; that God would give him a quiet house, wise Councellors, and valiant Souldiers: And how agreeable is this to the Doctrine of the Scriptures mentioned before? A duty not only acceptable to Governours, but also to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Oh! then pray and cry earnestly to God for those that are over us, *That in their peace ye may have peace, and that under them ye may lead a quiet life, in all godliness and honesty.*

4. *Use.*

4. *Use.* Fourthly, Then be not offended at reproaches and ſcorns you meet withal in the ways of God: If God will thus, and otherwiſe honour his people, do you think that men can diſhonour you? Indeed, if things and perſons were to be accounted as the world judgeth of them, then the moſt holy ones and ways are the moſt vile and abominable; yea, *the off-ſcouring of all things*; but God ſpeaks otherwiſe of you, and of his ways, to which we ought to attend, and bear our ſelves upon; and happy are they who are not offended at the ways of God, whatever they meet with from men; yea, when they ſpeak all manner of evil againſt you falſly for Chriſts ſake; for ſo have the moſt eminent Servants of God fared in the world, who yet were of more value with God than thouſands of others, for of ſuch only in all times of difficulties God hath been entreated; yea, God hath, and oft doth bring it about in his Providence, that the world doth own and acknowledge the worth of a godly ſtate, and priviledge of a holy man, and much deſires that happineſs; namely, when he inflicts terrors upon a wicked man, either of death, or hell, How doth he then bleſs the ſtate of the Righteous! what would he not give to be in the ſtate of a godly and holy man, to be aſſured of the pardon of his ſins, of the everlaſting love of God to his Soul? How doth he condemn and curſe his evil life and wicked ways, and call for the Prayer of the righteous, or of thoſe that fear God, that they may prevail with God for him? as we have in *Job* 33. verſe 21, 22. *His fleſh is conſumed, his bones that were not ſeen ſtick out, his Soul draweth near to the grave, and his life to the deſtroyers,*

ſtroyers. If there be a meſſenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto man his uprightneſs, then he is gratious unto him, and ſaith, Deliver him from going down to the pit. Then, Oh pray! that God would ſhew mercy to pardon his ſin, to ſave his Soul, to deliver him from eternal torments. Thus many times, when God beſets even a wicked man with terrors, and hath him as *Balaam* betwixt two walls, then his language is, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my later end be like his.* This God doth, that he might raiſe the price and value of his Children in the world, and honour them even in the eyes of men, who are careleſs of his Honour and Glory.

5. Laſtly, By way of Uſe, then I beſeech you that fear God, that profeſs ſtrictneſs of Principles and Perſwaſions differing in ſome things from the way of others, that ye will ſo walk and behave your ſelves in all holineſs of Converſation, that you may evidence to the world the holineſs and harmleſneſs of your differing Imaginations and ways: Conſider what is that which hath made every Age ſo backward to allow any Reformation or change relating to Religious worſhip, but a ſecret jealouſie that it would tend to innovate or diſturb the Peace & Civil Government of the Nation. Certainly Chriſtianity in the higheſt profeſſion and practice of it, did never truly prejudice the affairs of the world: and if any, in any Age, have under that badge & profeſſion done or acted any thing injurious to Government or Governours, it is not from the tendencie and conduct of Chriſtian Principles, but from the fury and miſleading of their own luſts, and car-

carnal Intereſts. Therefore I beſeech you ſo to walk, as to null and make void the common accuſations againſt holineſs, and ſtop the mouths of unreaſonable Enemies and Accuſers. To be ſo gratious in word and action, ſo righteous, juſt, humble, patient, ſelf-denying, giving up your ſelves to the obedience of the Truth, not minding this world ſo much, as the great Concernments of Eternity; that you may be accounted a people worthy of your Chriſtian Profeſſion, and of the name of holineſs and purity that is upon you; worthy of your Goſpel-liberty, the moſt deſirable bleſſing of your life; and worthy to be called on for Prayer and Supplications for the afflicted, for the Nation, yea, for the life of the King, and for the proſperity of the People.

FINIS.